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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Higher Education Project-Afghan Master's of Education

OVERVIEW

The rapid expansion of primary school enrollment since 2002 is placing demand on the Afghan education system to provide more qualified teachers at the secondary level. Universities must be adequately prepared to train future secondary school teachers to meet this growing demand. Currently, 64 percent of university professors have only a bachelor's degree themselves. Thus, the Graduate Studies Center (GSC) at Kabul Education University (KEU) established a Master's of Education (M.Ed.) program to enable teacher educators from across the country to better prepare the growing number of needed secondary teachers to teach the next generation of Afghans.

The Master's of Education curriculum was designed in collaboration with the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Kabul Education University, and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE). A study tour to the UMass by the MoHE and KEU design team helped to make the collaborative design of the curriculum a success. During the program's first year, UMass professors taught alongside Afghan professors as mentors. Afghan professors took on a greater role throughout the course of the year so that by the start of the second year, only Afghan professors were teaching the courses.

Consistent with KEU's mission and values, the M.Ed. advances education professors' knowledge and skills in pedagogy, educational and information technologies, curriculum development, applied research methods, educational psychology, leadership and administrative skills. The program trains Afghanistan's educational leaders of tomorrow through promoting excellence in teaching and learning; half of those enrolled are women. The program is taught in Dari, and conforms to international best practices.

ACTIVITIES

- Selected and translated appropriate teaching materials into Dari
- Established gender-balanced admissions and associated procedures
- Recruited international and Afghan lead trainers and co-trainers
- Enrolled 44 students (teacher educators from various universities across the country) during the first two semesters (50 percent female)
- Managed four separate student enrollments for a total of 88 students

EXPECTED RESULTS

- Twenty-two Master's graduates a year from the program (first group completed its studies in December 2009)
- Improved teaching capacity among university professors, thus improving the quality and reputation of teacher training programs at universities across the country
- An expanded pool of educational experts in education who can undertake departmental leadership, research and graduate-level teaching
- An expanded pool of faculty members with Master's degrees, some of whom could undertake Ph.D. studies at a later date
- An established high-quality graduate degree program serving as a model for future Master's programs in Afghanistan